

New York (city). Arlington
galleries

AN EXHIBITION OF PICTURES

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BY MAXWELL ARMFIELD

February 11th to March 2d, Inclusive

THE ARLINGTON GALLERIES

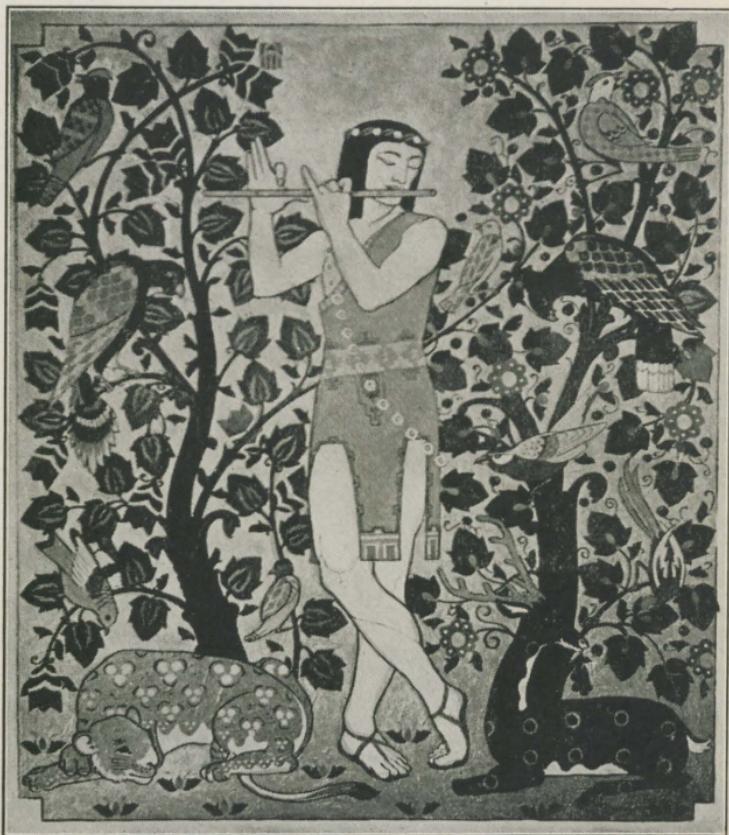
No. 274 Madison Avenue, New York

Between 39th and 40th Streets

Note

IT will be noticed that these pictures are very varied both in method and treatment. They are so of set purpose, for the artist feels that each subject demands individual attention in these two particulars. The method employed often becomes part of the technical symbolism by which the meaning is conveyed. We do not now perhaps fully appreciate the value of tradition from this point of view; for the artists of the past have left us valuable hints as to the results obtained by certain methods and their emotional effect. These effects are as legitimate for us as for them if they are sincerely obtained. The mere surface imitation of a style of work in vogue hundreds of years ago is, of course, the height of folly, especially when effects are aped in a quite different medium; but it is also true that much of what we now fancy to be ignorance or mannerism was due to the necessary use of certain materials. This is especially true of Tempera when used in the traditional Italian way as it has been in most of the pictures so marked here. The color in powder is mixed with yolk of egg in place of oil, and takes on a character that obliges certain methods of technique which are quite different in effect from those of oil or water-color. It is also different from the modern so-called tempera colors put up in tubes. The panels entitled a Musical Sequence were executed in the latter medium and should be compared with a purely traditional picture such as the Scarlet Larkspur or Butterfly Dance.

The most popular characteristic of Tempera is its translucency and resulting intensity of hue. It is quite unsuited however to atmospheric representation such as may be so easily accomplished with the oil medium.



A MUSICAL SEQUENCE

Pictures

1 Auto-Lithograph; A COTSWOLD VALLEY

2 BLUE LILLIES

3 THREE PORTRAITS (Tempera)

JUSTINIA WITH A BIRD

THE QUARRYMAN

THE SCENTED TULIP

4 SCARLET LARKSPUR (Tempera)

5 CYCLAMEN IN THE WOOD (Tempera)

The cyclamen is a rather curious flower which seems to like cool and shady places amongst rocks, not far, perhaps, from the remains of the snow. In these deep places of shelter the little moths too, find refuge from too boisterous winds and flutter vaguely between the sparse vegetation of the rocky ground. The cyclamen themselves easily attract most of the attention. They have the air of coming from some old missal, where their formal grace and sturdy spirals seems thoroughly in place, and where their violet flowers hang and burn with strange purple fire, as they do here.

6 AN ARIZONA POSY (Tempera)

7 DOWA HYÁNIN, Dancing

This impression of an Amerind child performing one of the traditional dances is perhaps unusual in treatment. I feel myself that the emotion given me by these songs and dances, and by the method and character of the Indian himself, is curiously unlike the impression one had gained from books and so forth. To me there is a strangely refined, delicate and aristocratic aroma in their art that is so similar to the very early Chinese feeling as to be reasonably rendered in similar ways by

the painter. Especially does the rather inconclusive and suggestive character of silk-painting seem to indicate that sense of something apart and far withdrawn from the vulgarity of modern existence, that permeates every inflection of these quiet and sweetly rippling cadences of sound and movement.

8 BUTTERFLY DANCE (Tempera)

This is a variation in Tempera, of Dowa Hyanin. The medium has been chosen in this case to express the gaiety of the dance, for it appears in reality to be an early spring dance for rain.

9 MRS. CHARLES COBURN, in "The Yellow Jacket"

10 PORTRAIT OF NORMAN WILKINSON

11 THE EMBROIDERER (Tempera)

12 WIND OF THE SOUTH (Tempera)

13 THE VISIT

This picture must admit to the aspersion of storytelling. The girl in black has come with bad news to visit her friend. The latter being worthy of the relation, has refused to commiserate, and has pointed out that such things are more reasonably taken as calls to more unselfish living, and no longer excuses for brooding. The visitor drops her handkerchief as this new view of the matter suffuses her, and the passage outside being now lit up, flames like a dawn above the doorway.

14 ESCAPE

A pastel cartoon. The original in Tempera, is let into the white panelling above a London fireplace. The subject is very inadequately rendered by the word 'escape'. It is connected with the Rider on the White Horse of the Apocalypse, and also with Pegasus perhaps, and all those pale swift steeds of the poets which know the lonely uplands of

thought. Here with swift feet 'beautiful upon the mountains' one looks to meet wayfarers, bringing them good tidings of peace.

15 THE TAMALPAIS SERIES

Hokusai is the most generally known painter, unless it be Hiroshige, who first grouped a number of works about a single idea. But centuries before these Japanese, there had been, in China, a similar sequence of subject-matter which every young artist was expected to treat in his own individual way. This is partly how Tradition is carried on, and is perhaps how best to bring out originality. When the painter imagines himself quite free, as at present, it is most unusual to come across anything really fresh, and there is much to be said for the practice of set subjects.

1 PURPLE AND GOLD

This picture shows the typical contrast between burnt grassy hills and deep woods, kept to the steep valleys by the moisture and sea winds.

2 MADRONE TREES

In this picture I have tried to give the impression of an intensely hot day, when sun and heat draw most of the color out of the landscape. Nothing, however, can well extract the red from Madrone Stems. The trunks are used symbolically also to convey the feeling of flame. Tamalpais is thought by the Indians to resemble a maiden, lying upon the foothills, her long hair streaming away behind along the mountain. The flaming trees seem to guard the mountain somewhat as the wall of flame was conceived as guarding Brynhilda. The insistence on curved lines also carries out the female element throughout the technical symbolism.

3 TELEGRAPH HILL

An almost tropical sunset. The wind is tearing in from the sea through the narrow Golden Gate, making the long tattered leaves of the Eucalyptus rattle against their pale trunks

The electric lights around the bay give a strange air to the scene as they shoot their harsh bolts of pale violet or yellow through the black plumes of the trees. The clatter of these hard leaves reminds one insensibly of the thorny and scaled growths and live things of the desert regions where these lurid skies are the rule.

4 FOG

I intended here to represent the feeling of a mid-summer day when the chill fog from the sea in spear-like ranks begins to scale the foot-hills. The sunlight at first becomes strangely pallid, and then fades into a white twilight that, when not obscured entirely by fog, shows things in a curiously incisive way. It is the transitional light that we see here.

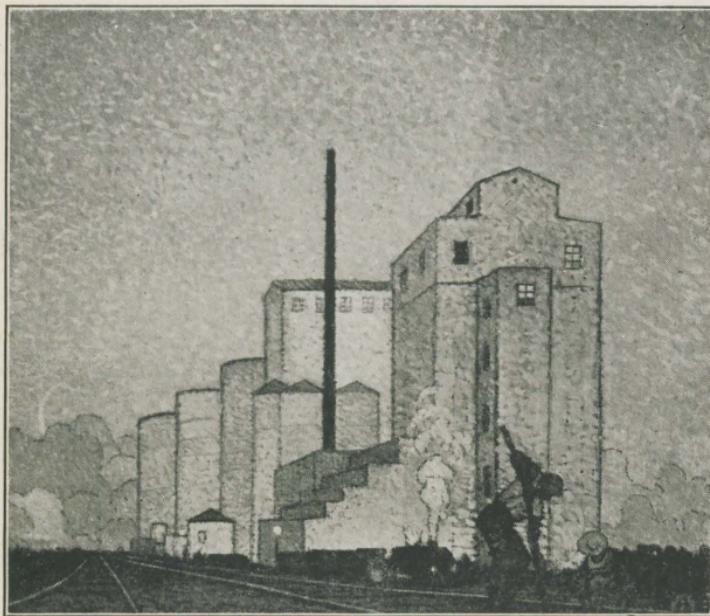
5 MILL VALLEY

This is one of those hot days with little mist, when the atmosphere seems to be shot through as with a bluish fire which tints all the shadows especially, and neutral objects such as rocks.

16 GOLDEN GATE

17 THE SANTA FE IN KANSAS

Traveling over the vast Kansan plain, one is struck by the importance of the Railroad in modern life, more especially where the line is flanked by the great grain elevators and ice-plants. The day has passed when objects were considered ugly or beautiful in themselves, and we now look upon them for what they stand for mentally, or the forces which



THE SANTA FE IN KANSAS

they show in operation. Indeed it is often these basic forces that the artist is trying to represent through the symbols he chooses, and it is not these symbols—grain elevator or railroad—that are the actual subject of his picture or poem.

18 GOLF IN THE WEST (Tempera)

19 SNOW IN THE CANYON

20 A MUSICAL SEQUENCE

These panels, intended for the walls of a music room, are executed in modern materials in modern methods, including stencilling, to see if such means could be used to obtain any sort of quality or dis-

tinction. It is only by the use of these speedy methods that such decorative work can be made practicable for any but wealthy people, so that it is of importance that painters of today should experiment with them. There seems to be no reason why such work should not be extensively used in public and semi-public buildings, especially in passages, waiting-rooms and other uninteresting places, as well as in the home.

21 PERCUSSION

22 WIND (From a Study of Ted Shawn)

23 STRINGS

24 "BRIGHTNESS OF THE DAWN" (Tempera)

25 "GREAT RAIN-CLOUD" (Tempera)

26 THE GOLDEN SHORE

27 TOURISTS

28 PORTRAIT OF AN ENGLISHWOMAN

29 MAGGIORE

30 "THE WAKEFUL SHEPHERD" (Tempera)

Drawings in the Passage

THESE drawings for stage costumes and scenes were worked out for small halls and large rooms; not, for the most part, for the ordinary theatre. With one exception, the set for 'The Lost Piece of Silver,' they are all designed to be produced without any lighting 'effect' other than the flat, diffused light, white in color.

The scenes will no doubt strike most people as grey and pale, after the orgy of orange, purple and blue which is generally considered 'modern.' These drawings, however, are not intended to be modern. They merely attempt to treat the Visual side of production with the same attention and

intelligence as is bestowed on the Audible and Motive sides. With this aim before one, it is of course impossible to restrict the color used to any particular range of hue or intensity. It will necessarily vary with the play to be produced.

I have studiously avoided the use of colored light, which is probably responsible for more artistic stultification in the modern theatre than anything else. Apart from a carefully chosen greyish green which seems to be necessary in some kinds of plays where moonlight has to be represented, colored light is almost always unnecessary and artificial in its effect. My own theory is that the purpose of light is to make color visible, not to stain everything it touches as with a weak solution of strawberry jam or permanganate of potassium.

To suppose that vivid hues have anything to do with the brightness of sunlight is an extraordinary fallacy that obtains in some directions. The more violent the sunshine, the less color is found in the landscape, until, in great heat and sun, the whole scene resolves itself into a greyish pink or yellow monochrome. In very clear atmospheric conditions such as obtain in the high deserts, we notice more color along with sunshine, but it is then of a vibrating paleness that is still intense, never violent except at sunset. It is as absurd to limit the 'colorist' to the use of primaries as it would be to expect a musician to restrict himself to the lower centre of the keyboard and to pound it with all his strength continuously. The results are exactly the same.

- 1 SCENE FOR THE LOST PIECE OF SILVER
- 2 SCENE FOR PIERROT'S WELCOME
- 3 SCENE FOR REVOLT
- 4 FRONT CURTAIN FOR THE GREENLEAF THEATRE
- 5 SCENE AND COSTUMES FOR THE GRASSBLADE

The Prices of such of the exhibits as are for sale, and which range from Five to One Thousand Dollars, may be obtained from the attendant.



THE EMBROIDERER

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A SCHOOL FOR COMMUNITY DRAMA

DIRECTION

MAXWELL ARMFIELD
CONSTANCE SMEDLEY
(Mrs. Maxwell Armfield)

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